

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 30th October 2024 at 6pm at Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood

PRESENT: Cllr Rae Frederick (Chairman) (*from 6.12pm*)
Cllr Philip Day (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Andrew Briers
Cllr Luke Dadford
Cllr Gareth DeBoos
Cllr Mary DeBoos
Cllr Janet Georgiou
Cllr John Haywood
Cllr James Swyer
Cllr Michael Thierry
Cllr Becci Windsor (*from 6.12pm*)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk
Mrs Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk
District Cllr Jeremy Heron (*from 6.12pm*)
District Councillor Steve Rippon-Swaine

ABSENT: Cllr Ingrid De Bruyn
Cllr Peter Kelleher
Cllr Glenys Turner

Cllr Day took the Chair for the first part of the meeting.

C/7225 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

C/7226 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Kelleher and Turner, and District Cllr Nigel Linford.

C/7227 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Day declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 20 as his employer had prepared the football site lease.

C/7228 STRATEGY REVIEW

Members considered the Town Clerk's report and reviewed the Council's strategy (*Annex A*).

No changes were proposed to the Vision, Today and Tomorrow sections.

There was a discussion about whether the wording of the strategic aims was reflective of what the Council was trying to achieve. It was agreed these should be updated as follows:

- Improving our facilities, services and green spaces (no change)
- Developing, energising and facilitating events
- Improving communication with residents and businesses (no change)
- Shaping positive development of the town

Key priorities for each workstream were discussed and updated as follows:

2026-27 Implement open spaces management plans
 2025-26 Mark 80th anniversaries of VE/VJ Days
 2025-26 Increase engagement with local schools
 2025-26 Review and improve digital communication
 2025-26 Strengthen links with the business community
 2025-26 Promote observance / increase awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan

With regards to communications, Members were reminded that each committee should be proactively considering matters that need to be communicated.

RESOLVED: That the Council Strategy be updated as outlined above (*see Annex A for revised version*).

ACTION C Wilkins

After a brief pause, at 7.06pm the Town Mayor took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

**C/7229
 GRANT AID AWARDS**

Grant Aid certificates were presented to representatives as follows:-

- i) £500 to ERRFC towards the costs of green and energy efficient equipment.
- ii) £500 to Ringwood Veterans towards the costs of communication and IT.
- iii) £600 to STARF towards the cost of its Financial Inclusion Advisor role.

**C/7230
 RINGWOOD POLICE**

Inspector Darren Ord presented the Neighbourhood Policing Team quarterly report (*Annex B*).

He ran through the crime statistics for the last quarter compared to the previous quarter. There had been a significant drop in shoplifting offences and a good number of detections as a result of working closely with businesses. There had been a rise in public order offences during the summer period, which was usual, and some local officers had been deployed to assist with public order operations nationally. Overall, crime statistics were down across the board to a similar period last year.

He outlined current operations and some recent successes and outcomes, which Members were very pleased to hear, and said two new PCs had recently joined the team. He reported that a new monthly neighbourhood management meeting would take place to forge closer links with the Council, which the Town Clerk would be attending.

In response to a concern about increased drug activity in the town, he said he was aware of this issue but needed more intelligence and encouraged reporting of what, when, who and details of any vehicles involved.

In response to a question about the number of prosecutions resulting from each reported crime, it was noted that generally this was 20% locally.

Members reported seeing a great improvement in communication, saying it was reassuring to know the Police are aware of issues and taking action. Also, residents are noticing that attendance has increased following reports of incidents.

Members thanked Inspector Ord for his very informative report.

C/7231

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2024, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/7232

RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr Briers presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 2nd October 2024.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 2nd October 2024 be received.

C/7233

PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Day presented the minutes of the Planning Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 4th October 2024.

He updated Members on the Moortown Lane planning applications.

He, together with Cllrs G and M DeBoos and the Deputy Town Clerk, had attended another meeting with NFDC and the applicant and details would be reported to PT&E Committee on 1st November in order that the Committee could agree a response, prior to consideration by NFDC Planning Committee on 13th November.

He thanked Cllrs G & M DeBoos and Chris Treleaven for the huge amount of work they had done to assist with putting together the latest draft response.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town and Environment Committee meeting held on 24th October 2024 be received.

C/7234

STAFFING COMMITTEE

Cllr Haywood presented the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 16th October 2024.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 16th October 2024 be received, with the exception of S/0121, which would be considered later on the agenda.

**C/7235
POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Cllr M DeBoos presented the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 23rd October 2024.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 23rd October 2024 be received, with the exception of F/6352, which would be considered next on the agenda.

**C/7236
TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

Members considered a recommendation from Policy and Finance Committee on 23rd October 2024 to endorse the Investment Strategy & Policy (Treasury Management) (*F/6352 refers*).

RESOLVED: That the Treasury Management Policy (*Annex C*) be endorsed.

ACTION R Fitzgerald

**C/7237
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM STAFFING COMMITTEE**

Members considered the Town Clerk's report (*Annex D*) in relation to the recommendations from the Staffing Committee on 30th October 2024 (*S/0121 refers*).

Membership of the selection panel for the role of Finance Manager was discussed and agreed.

Cllr Haywood invited Council to reject the Committee's recommendation for the reasons outlined in the Town Clerk's report.

RESOLVED: 1) That the selection panel for the role of Finance Manager be comprised of the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Chair of Policy & Finance Committee, Cllr Day and Cllr Haywood.
2) That the recommendation to form a Task & Finish Group to conduct a review of the organisation be not supported.

ACTION C Wilkins

**C/7238
COMMITTEE COMPOSITION**

Members considered appointing Cllr Thierry to the Policy and Finance Committee and making committee composition a standing agenda item, which is standard practice at NFDC and HCC.

RESOLVED: 1) That Cllr Thierry be appointed to the Policy and Finance Committee.
2) That a standing item be added to the Full Council agenda to consider any changes in composition of Committees.

ACTION C Wilkins / N Vodden

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C/7239

PUBLICATION OF MEMBERS' MEETING ATTENDANCE DATA

Members considered the Town Clerk's report (*Annex E*) and discussed whether information on members' attendance at meetings should be published on the Council's website.

Some Members were of the view that this would be an inappropriate use of officer time, and also that it was not a true reflection of the work undertaken by councillors outside of committees. However, others felt it was in the public interest to publish the information.

After some discussion, Members voted on a proposal to publish meeting attendance data on the Council's website on a 6-monthly basis, showing the number of Council and Committee meetings only that each Member could have attended, did attend and gave apologies for.

RESOLVED: That meeting attendance data be published on the Council's website on a 6-monthly basis, as outlined above.

ACTION C Wilkins / N Vodden

C/7240

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AT LONG LANE

The Town Clerk reported that the formal open day for the new facilities would be held on Friday 1st November, and all Members were invited to attend. As the active stage of the project has reached a conclusion, he recommended that the standing item be removed from future agendas.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk's verbal report be noted.

C/7241

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED

The Town Mayor reported that she had attended the following events of note:

- Hardship Forum at NFDC, highlighting the fact that places that are doing well have hubs.
- Under 1s new group at Carvers, a new initiative from the Clubhouse Manager, which was growing in success.
- Met Year 9 students at Ringwood School, who were interested and engaged in learning about how the Council works.
- Ringwood Society Design and Conservation Awards presentation.
- Round Table 65th anniversary celebration.

C/7242

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County and District Councillor Thierry reported the sad passing of the Chairman of Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council. He shared the good news that the Somerley recycling centre is to be retained, despite the recommended closure. He had awarded a grant to Ringwood Rotary towards the Christmas Eve event. He was working with constituents seeking help with benefits following removal of the Winter Fuel Allowance and reporting flooding issues.

District Cllr Haywood reported on a new government consultation on proxy voting and remote attendance, which also applies to town and parish councils.

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Cllr Windsor left the meeting at 8.16pm.

District Cllr Heron reported on a Call for Sites consultation, which was the start of work on a new Local Plan for the district. Another consultation on a district-wide parking strategy had also recently launched, with members of the public and businesses encouraged to respond.

C/7243

REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS

Cllr Day reported on the recent 999 Day was a brilliant event, both informative and friendly. He congratulated everyone who had been involved in its organisation. He also offered congratulations to winners of the Ringwood Society Design and Conservation Awards. Congratulations to Ringwood Society award winners.

Cllrs G & M DeBoos had both attended citizenship day at Ringwood School.

Cllr Dadford had attended a Forest Forge event and said they were keen to engage with the Council.

Cllr Haywood commented on roadworks outside the Poulner White Hart, which appeared to be drainage works, which he hoped would address the flooding issue in this location. Following the sad passing of the Chairman of Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council, he had been appointed acting Chairman. A new Chairman would be elected at the end of November.

C/7244

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

The following meeting dates were noted:

Planning, Town & Environment	10.00am	Friday 1 st November 2024
Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 6 th November 2024
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 20 th November 2024
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 27 th November 2024

C/7245

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public were excluded because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted (*Confidential minutes - Annex F*).

C/7246

LEGAL MATTERS

The Town Clerk reported on developments in the Football Club project.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk's verbal report be received.

C/7247
FOOTBALL SITE LEASE

Members considered the Town Clerk's report (*Confidential Annex G*) and summary of the lease and noted the solicitor's advice to approve the lease.

There was a question about how much officer time would be involved in ensuring compliance with the lease terms. The Town Clerk said that rent invoices would be issued for rent, as per the previous arrangement with the Football Club. He felt there was no need for a complicated inspection scheme as, in practice, any issues arising will undoubtedly be reported. His greatest concern was the ground being shared by the Football Club and the Community Sports Trust, which was a big change for the Club. However, mechanisms were in place for the Council to keep a finger on the pulse by way of an ongoing scrutiny panel.

RESOLVED: That the football site lease be approved, and that authorisation be approved for the use of the Council's seal to execute it.

ACTION C Wilkins

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

APPROVED
27th November 2024

TOWN MAYOR

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TOWN COUNCIL

30th October 2024

Strategy Review

1. Introduction and reason for report

- 1.1 Since adopting a strategy for the first time in October 2022, the Council has reviewed it once and it is appropriate to do so again every year; ideally shortly before the budget for the following year is prepared.

2. Background information and options

- 2.1 The strategy is a statement of members' agreed aims for the following year and the two following it. It serves to guide officers in their allocation of staff time and attention and council funds (within agreed budgets). It is therefore a very important annual opportunity for members to consider and express their preferences and priorities.
- 2.2 The fundamental premise underlying the strategy is that members (not officers) decide **what** the council should do and **when** it is going to do it but officers (not members) decide **how** this will be done and **who** is going to do it. Officers are responsible for reporting back to members if they conclude that the available staff resources are insufficient or that budgets are insufficient or incorrectly balanced to achieve the strategic goals. Officers should then present options and/or recommendation for change. Members can then consider these and/or adjust the strategy appropriately.
- 2.3 Much of the day-to-day work of the Council and its officers consists of routine public services and reacting to various kinds of problems, reports, events and requests which cannot be planned for in any detail. There are also many relatively modest or short-term actions which cannot sensibly be included in a strategy document. Necessarily, therefore, the strategy only mentions a small number of large, high-priority initiatives. It should be understood that staff will continue to work on the other matters not mentioned, but will refer to the strategy document when advising members and when allocating discretionary resources.
- 2.4 The current strategy document is attached. Since this was adopted, circumstances have changed somewhat. As to capital projects, the main changes are:
- Completion of the football facilities development project has been delayed.
 - The cemetery memorial wall project has been cast into doubt.
 - The grounds maintenance facility project has needed a re-design.
 - New Forest District Council has brought forward a proposal to improve access at Poulner Lakes.
 - Veolia Environmental Trust has awarded the Council a grant to implement part of the Carvers Masterplan.

On the resource side, it has emerged that, after a long period of remarkably low staff turnover, the Council will need to recruit several new members of staff over the next 12 months. This will cause disruption and a temporary loss of capacity whilst new incumbents settle into their roles. It also appears that budget pressures have been more acute than anticipated and this is not likely to change within the strategy period. The strategy needs to take account of these factors if it is to be realistic.

- 2.5 Officers have therefore prepared the attached draft update of the strategy. This is intended to assist members' deliberations, not constrain them. Members are

encouraged to consider carefully if it truly reflects their wishes and priorities and to adjust it where it does not.

3. Issues for decision and any recommendations

Members are respectfully invited to discuss and, if possible, agree their most important priorities for financial year 2025-26 and, if practicable, the two years following as well.

For further information, contact:

Christopher Wilkins, Town Clerk
Direct Dial: 01425 484720
Email: chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk



Ringwood Town Council – Strategy 2025-2028

A

AGREED AT
THE COUNCIL
MEETING
30th October 2024

VISION

Our Council tightly focussed on helping our market town to thrive by improving the things that matter most to Ringwood residents, businesses and visitors

Y3 – 2027-28

Further implementation of Carvers Masterplan

Y3 – 2027-28

Explore options for further development of events

Y3 – 2027-28

Y3 – 2027-28

Review Neighbourhood Plan in light of Local Plan changes

Y2 – 2026-27

Implementing open space management plans
Further implementation of Carvers Masterplan

Y2 – 2026-27

Hold celebration of Charter Market’s 800th anniversary

Y2 – 2026-27

Review and improve digital communications

Y2 – 2026-27

Identify needs of growing population and gaps in provision

Y1 – 2025-26

Develop management plans for open spaces
Proceed with Carvers Masterplan and cemetery development plans
Proceed with new grounds department facility

Y1 – 2025-26

Organise celebration of Charter Market’s 800th anniversary
Review options for Skate Jam
Mark 80th anniversaries of VE Day and VJ Day

Y1 - 2025-26

Publish quarterly newsletters
Increase engagement with local schools
Strengthen links with business community

Y1 – 2025-26

Promote Thriving Market Place design
Promote observance / increase awareness of Neighbourhood Plan

TODAY

Ringwood Town Council is known for organizing great events, providing oversight of planning applications, looking after valued green spaces and being a good employer

Improving our facilities, services & green spaces

Developing, energising and facilitating events

Improving communication with residents and businesses

Shaping positive development of the town

THE FUTURE

Ringwood Town Council is

- Known for organizing great events, providing oversight of planning applications, Looking after valued green spaces and being a good employer.
- The first point of contact for all local public services in Ringwood
- Proactively engaging local people about issues that matter to them
- providing valued support to Ringwood businesses and the local economy

ENABLERS and DISRUPTORS

Skills of councillors and staff – Officers will review staff roles and responsibilities and propose changes required by this updated strategy.
Events Management Sub-Committee. Volunteers. Neighbourhood Plan – We will monitor our enhanced CIL receipts and prioritise their use
IT and staff changes – Allow time for recruits and new infotech to settle in



Ringwood Quarterly Report



Ringwood South

	Current 90 days	Previous 90 days	Difference
1b Violence with Injury	20	15	+5
1c Violence without Injury	42	38	+4
4a1 Burglary Residential (including outbuildings)	7	1	+6
4a2 Burglary Business and Community	12	4	+8
4b Vehicle Offences	17	7	+10
4c Theft from the Person	1	1	0
4d Bicycle Theft	3	1	+2
4e Shoplifting	11	27	-16
4f All Other Theft Offences	15	11	+4
5a Criminal Damage	13	13	0
5b Arson	0	1	+1
6a Trafficking of Drugs	2	1	+1
6b Possession of Drugs	2	5	-3
7 Possession of Weapons Offences	2	1	+1
8 Public Order Offences	33	18	+15
TOTAL	180	144	+36

	Current 90 days	Previous 90 days	Difference
Residential Burglary (Excl Sheds/Garages)	1	0	+1



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Ringwood Quarterly Report



Ringwood North (Poulner)

	Current 90 days	Previous 90 days	Difference
1b Violence with Injury	5	5	0
1c Violence without Injury	18	18	0
4a1 Burglary Residential	4	0	+4
4a2 Burglary Business and Community	1	0	+1
4b Vehicle Offences	13	3	+9
4d Bicycle Theft	0	0	0
4e Shoplifting	13	2	+11
4f All Other Theft Offences	3	2	+1
5a Criminal Damage	5	7	-2
5b Arson	1	0	+1
6a Trafficking of Drugs	0	0	0
6b Possession of Drugs	1	0	+1
7 Possession of Weapons Offences	1	1	0
8 Public Order Offences	3	6	-3
TOTAL	68	44	24

	Current 90 days	Previous 90 days	Difference
Residential Burglary (Excl Sheds/Garages)	2	0	+2





Ringwood Quarterly Report

Ringwood East & Sopley

	Current 90 days	Previous 90 days	Difference
1b Violence with Injury	1	1	0
1c Violence without Injury	0	3	-3
4a1 Burglary Residential	3	2	+1
4a2 Burglary Business and Community	0	0	0
4b Vehicle Offences	2	2	0
4d Bicycle Theft	2	0	+2
4f All Other Theft Offences	3	2	+1
5a Criminal Damage	0	0	0
6b Possession of Drugs	0	0	0
8 Public Order Offences	4	2	+2
TOTAL	15	12	+3

	Current 90 days	Previous 90 days	Difference
Residential Burglary (Excl Sheds/Garages)	0	1	-1





Ringwood Quarterly Report



Current Operations/Areas of Focus

Op Stool is a local operation which aims to target the issue of non-dwelling burglaries in Ringwood & surrounding areas. As part of this operation we are able to utilise additional resources (such as specially trained Roads Policing officers and dog units) in order to respond to live incidents. Locally, as a neighbourhood team, we endeavour to attend all reported incidents of non-dwelling burglaries in order to carry out a CCTV scope of the area and house-to-house if appropriate to do so.

Op HARDHOME is a local operation that has been set up alongside **Op Stool** to assist with identification and recovery of stolen property. We attended a number of events in the summer such as New Forest show, Ellingham show. A number of further events are planned before the end of the year. Items are security marked using our Dot Peen machine and then registered by the owner on a nationwide website called Immobilise, so that they can be flagged if stolen, and more easily identified if recovered by police or sold on. These events will be advertised on our Facebook page as well as by other means but please speak to residents about this free service and take details to pass on to enable us to reach as many people as possible.

Shoplifting – Business crime has been taken on as an area priority. We are attending all reports, building links to the local businesses and detecting more offences – through CCTV and ID. Use of Out of Court disposals as well as court summons employed. You will have seen a rise in our social media posts looking for public support to ID offenders.

Op Connected – This has seen our Response teams based at Lyndhurst operating across the New Forest on Late shifts (until 0300) in conjunction with Roads Policing colleagues to target high crime areas, locate offenders – detect and prevent crime.

Carnival – Attended and dealt with a number of incidents as well as some excellent positive engagement. We have recently released a media appeal for witnesses to an assault that night.

999 Day – attended with emergency service colleagues. Great engagement and positive feedback from community.

Bicycle Marking Event – August - well turned out event security marking cycles with NFDC.



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Ringwood Quarterly Report



Successes/Outcomes

- Arrest (again) of well-known juvenile offender – currently progressing through court system.
- Arrest of male in stolen van containing property stolen in a number of burglaries (power tools)
 - Arrest of well-known prolific shoplifter – remanded.
- Arrest of male from Bournemouth following stabbing incident in Hightown Rd, Ringwood
 - Recent Guilty finding at court for local male for Theft from Motor vehicle.
- 2 recent warrants relating to drug supply and linking with Financial investigation Unit with regards to earnings.

Changes in the Neighbourhood Team

New members of Staff!!! – PC Natalie Roberts and PC Nasrin Chalk.

DNO PC Ian Bigland

Sgt Chris Pell

Inspector: Insp 1904 Darren Ord



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REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE – 23rd OCTOBER 2024**RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL TREASURY MANAGEMENT****1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Town Council has a treasury management policy which was last updated in November 2023. The policy governs the way in which Council funds are managed.
- 1.2 The cash balances held by the Council at the end of March 2024 amounted to £699,967 and with the first instalment of the precept later in April, cash balances increased to around £885,000. Whilst this is below the peak achieved in 2023/24 as a result of the football project, cash balances remain reasonably healthy.
- 1.3 A working balance of between £50,000 and £100,000 is maintained in the main imprest account with a further target of £50,000 held in an interest bearing instant access business account, but the bulk of funds which are not immediately required are currently invested with the CCLA.
- 1.4 The Treasury Management policy has been in place for just over 5 years and this report summarises the performance in that time and makes recommendations for some amendments to the Treasury Management Policy.

2. INVESTMENTS WITH THE CCLA

- 2.1 The CCLA was created in 1987 following the introduction of financial services regulation, although the organisation can trace its origins back to 1958. It is one of the largest UK charity fund managers and manages funds solely for Churches, Charities and Local Authorities. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, the CCLA currently manages funds in excess of £13.9 billion
- 2.2 The Town Council began investing funds with the CCLA at the end of 2018/19. In that year, funds had generated interest payments of £1,508. In the first full year using the CCLA facility, interest receipts of £3,353 were generated.
- 2.3 Interest rates have increased from historically very low levels and the CCLA continues to provide a return on investment at levels that the banks will not match. Interest generated in 2023/24 increased to £42,714, up from £17,280 in the previous year and just £427 in the year before that. However, with recent reductions in cash balances and the predicted reduction in interest rates, the prediction for the current year is that interest receipts will drop to £23,000.
- 2.4 Interest on funds held in the business instant access account with Lloyds Bank is very modest by comparison and amounted to £447 in 2023/24.
- 2.5 As a fund manager, rather than a bank, the CCLA is a more secure investment option than any single financial organisation. Any funds that are invested through the CCLA in the deposit fund are held on the investor's behalf by the constituent banks and in the unlikely event that anything causes the CCLA to go into liquidation or otherwise cease operating, the investments remain secure.
- 2.6 It was previously noted that the CCLA have an additional facility, the Local Authority Property Fund, in which funds are invested for growth in the longer term. The LAPF may offer a higher, if riskier, return on investment. However, consideration of such a scheme is only permitted by the treasury management policy if tied to a wider investment strategy in pursuit of specific planned future capital projects.
- 2.7 The LAPF is not recommended at this time but, whilst it is outside the parameters of the current treasury management policy, it may be a useful facility in future to help grow funds for a specific purpose.

3. Treasury Management Policy Statement

- 3.1 The current treasury management policy statement was approved in 2021 and updated in 2022 to allow the RFO delegated authority to transfer funds of up to £100,000 between accounts. This was to allow for payments on the football development project which may require settlement before approval to move necessary funds could be sought from this committee. This delegated authority is to be reviewed on completion of the project.
- 3.2 No further changes to the treasury management policy statement are being proposed at this time.

4. RECOMMENDATION

It is **recommended** that:-

- 4.1 Members endorse the Treasury Management Policy.

For further information please contact:

Rory Fitzgerald, Finance Manager or

Tel: 01425 484723

rory.fitzgerald@ringwood.gov.uk

For further information please contact:

Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk

Tel: 01425 484720

Chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk

TOWN COUNCIL

30th October 2024

Recommendations from Staffing Committee

1. Introduction and reason for report

- 1.1 The Staffing Committee met on 16th October and agreed two recommendations to the Council which now require decision. See minute reference S/0121 but the recommendations were:

“That the selection panel for the role of Finance Manager be comprised of the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Chair of Policy & Finance Committee plus 2 additional councillors to be appointed by Full Council.

That a Task and Finish Group be formed to conduct a review of the organisation, looking at structure, roles, nature of work, skills required and prioritising roles to be filled.”

2. Background information and options

- 2.1 The first recommendation is self-explanatory. There is a degree of urgency about this matter since officers need to proceed with the recruitment without delay if an appointment is to be made in time to allow for an effective handover to the new incumbent before the present incumbent leaves. Accordingly, if members find the first recommendation acceptable, the two additional councillors required to complete the panel need to be appointed at this meeting.
- 2.2 Officers have concerns about the second recommendation. First, it is not felt to be consistent with the proper allocation of roles and responsibilities as between members and officers (see especially paragraph 2.2 of the separate report about Council Strategy in this respect). Secondly, for an exercise of this kind to be worth doing, a significant commitment of time and attention from both members and officers would be needed. These are not available at present unless withdrawn from other matters which have hitherto been regarded as priorities. Finally, the likely effect on staff morale should not be under-estimated. The pursuit of efficiency and effectiveness in the use of staff resources in public service is entirely commendable but it tends to cause uncertainty and turmoil which worries staff – tending to increase absences and staff turnover. The last-mentioned, do not serve the interests of effectiveness or efficiency. Given the managerial changes which are inevitable anyway, adding further uncertainty and change would be particularly unwelcome at this time.
- 2.3 If the council concludes that a member-led review of staffing of the kind envisaged by the second recommendation is appropriate now despite officers' concerns, it is respectfully suggested that before the group is established and members appointed to it, there should be further discussion with officers about
- The precise scope of the review and especially which roles can be excluded from it
 - The respective roles of officers and members in undertaking the review
 - Terms of reference for the review
 - Which other tasks are to be set aside for the duration of the review

3. Issues for decision and any recommendations

- 3.1 **Members are respectfully invited to consider the first recommendation from the Staffing Committee and, if thought fit, appoint two councillors to join the recruitment panel.**

3.2 Officers respectfully recommend that members reject the second recommendation from the Staffing Committee or, failing this, agree arrangements to consult with officers about how best to carry it into effect.

For further information, contact:

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Direct Dial: 01425 484720
Email: chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk

Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk
Direct Dial: 01425 484721
Email: jo.hurd@ringwood.gov.uk

TOWN COUNCIL

30th October 2024

Publication of members' meeting attendance data

1. Introduction and reason for report

- 1.1 Data on members' attendance at meetings is collated by officers but not presently published (other than in the minutes of individual meetings). It was suggested at a recent meeting that members desired an opportunity to review possible publication of this data on the Council's website.

2. Background information and options

- 2.1 The publication of attendance data is not required by the transparency code but many town and parish councils choose to publish it voluntarily anyway, often in a statistical form. Because there is no legal obligation, what exactly is published would be for members to decide. For example, this could simply be a running total of meetings attended published every month or the annual publication of the percentage of meetings attended calculated by reference to the theoretical total possible. Doing this would involve officers in additional work but not enough to be a significant consideration provided members agree clear guidance on precisely what data is to be published and when.
- 2.2 Publication of the data would, in principle, serve the interest of transparency, one of the seven principles of public life (aka the Nolan Principles). However, statistics published without context could give an incomplete or even misleading impression. Some councillors are appointed to more committees or other bodies than others. Some councillors are also members of other authorities whilst others are not. There is more to the role of councillor than attending meetings anyway. For all these reasons, attendance at this Council's meetings would be a very crude measure of councillor service.
- 2.3 A further complication and issue to consider is whether regard should be had to the tendering (and acceptance) of apologies for absence. It could hardly be treated as if it amounted to attendance but should it count for nothing? (Members should also remember that leave of absence can be granted for specified periods relieving the recipient of all duty to attend. How, if at all, should this be reported when it arises?)
- 2.4 Another complication would be which types of meeting to include in the data. Presumably, it would include meetings of the full council and each of its committees (which officers tabulate at present) but should sub-committees, working parties and task and finish groups (which are not) be included as well? What about meetings of bodies to which councillors are appointed as representatives (about which officers are not necessarily even informed at present)?

3. Issues for decision and any recommendations

- 3.1 **Should information about members' attendance at meetings be published on the Council's website?**
- 3.2 **If so, what data and when?**

For further information, contact:

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